

Ernest von Hartz, News Editor Of The Times, Is Dead at 56

Headed National Convention Coverage—Also Served in Baltimore and Chicago

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Ernest von Hartz, news editor of The New York Times, died yesterday in St. Barnabas Hospital, the Bronx, of complications following a brain operation. He was 56 years old.

Mr. von Hartz had been a news executive of The Times for twelve years and news editor for eight. In the latter post he supervised the coverage and handling of news by the city, national, foreign and other news desks and directed the display of the news in the paper. He was responsible to the managing editor and his assistants.

Mr. von Hartz had been a newspaper man for thirty-four years. A commanding figure in the newsroom, he was nearly 6 feet 4 inches tall.

He was born in Rutherford, N. J., on Oct. 11, 1903, and was educated at St. John's College, Annapolis, Md. He decided on a career in journalism and began newspaper work on The Baltimore Sun in 1928. He remained with The Sun for nine years, except for a brief interlude, eventually becoming cable editor, the editor in charge of handling the foreign news.

Wrote Book Reviews

Mr. von Hartz served for two separated periods on The Times. First he came to The Times in 1935 as a copy editor on the foreign desk. During this period he began contributing to The Times Book Review, reviewing some of the more important books of foreign affairs. He wrote in trenchant style, firmly convinced that a war was coming, that the dictators would provoke it, and that the United States would be on the side of the democracies.

When the United States began mobilizing for defense, he came from Mr. von Hartz's Baltimore days. Col. Stanley Grogan, then a lieutenant colonel, was put in charge of the news division of War Department public relations.

Col. Grogan asked Mr. von Hartz to go to Washington to help him. Mr. von Hartz readily agreed, and left The Times early in 1941 to become civilian consultant to the news chief in charge of working up material for the press on the Army's activities.

As mobilization progressed, a move was made to get the civilians working in the War Department public information section to accept Army commissions. Mr. von Hartz believed that this would end the usefulness of having civilians working under regular Army officers.

As civilians, they had been free to suggest, criticize and give expert advice to superiors, but as subordinate officers, he felt, they could not speak so freely. Accordingly, he did not take a commission.

Served on Chicago Sun

Transferring to the War Production Board, Mr. von Hartz continued to serve in Washington until November, 1941. He then joined the newly established Chicago Sun, ten days prior to its first issue on Dec. 4. As foreign news editor and later as night managing editor, he helped to direct the paper's

work on. By nomination of The Sun, he was one of the twenty-five members of the first seminar of Columbia University's American Press Institute in October-November, 1946. This seminar was



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member, 1946. This seminar was organized for managing and news editors.

Mr. von Hartz returned to The Times in 1948 to head a project that studied experimental methods of emergency printing. In September of that year he was put in charge of make-up for the special United Nations edition that was flown to Paris for the meeting of the General Assembly. After that he edited and made up the newspaper's international air edition.

He was promoted in 1949 to head of the telegraph desk, the desk that handled domestic news outside of that dealing with metropolitan New York. When the news desks were reorganized in 1950, he became national news editor.

Mr. von Hartz was appointed assistant news editor in 1951, serving under Theodore M. Bernstein. The next year, when Mr. Bernstein became assistant managing editor, Mr. von Hartz became news editor.

Reporter At Heart

He served as editor in charge of The Times staff at the national conventions of the major political parties in 1952 and 1956.

After beginning as a reporter in Baltimore, Mr. von Hartz served for more than three decades on news desks there, in New York, in Washington and in Chicago. But he remained a reporter at heart.

On several occasions news beats for which Mr. von Hartz was responsible attracted the attention of the world press. One that was recalled by his associates was an exclusive he wrote for The Chicago Sun in 1944.

He reported that the Soviet Union was training German prisoners of war to exercise police functions in Germany in the interest of the Russians after the war. When the Soviet troops occupied East Germany, his exclusive was confirmed.

Mr. von Hartz married Miss Audrey Noonan of Baltimore. They had two children, Mrs. Lucien Carr and John von Hartz, a reporter for The Berkshire Eagle in Pittsfield, Mass., and three grandchildren. Their home in the city was at 29 Washington Square West and they had a country home at Champlain, N. Y.

Funeral plans were incomplete last night. The family requested that no flowers be sent, but instead that contributions be made to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation.